



MUSEUM
ALLIANCE

QUARTERLY

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM / VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 1

THE ARTISTRY OF THE HABITAT GROUP

The Museum: A New Dimension in Discovery

The Mirror with the Memory

A Fremont Letter

Spotlight

Book Reviews

Member's Information





MEMBERSHIP

The Museum Alliance awaits the pleasure of greeting you as a new member if you are not now participating in our many and varied programs. Publications, films, family participation and children's programs, special events in and away from the Museum—all these are yours to enjoy . . . among others.

Privileges and Pleasures of Membership are:

1. A subscription to the Museum Alliance QUARTERLY
2. Invitations to the NEW DIMENSIONS TO DELIGHT series of family participation programs—not open to the public
3. Summer science excursions for children
4. The monthly CALENDAR OF EVENTS from the Los Angeles County Museum
5. 50% discount on tickets for the Science and History Lecture Series
6. 20% discount on most items at the Museum Bookshop
7. Announcement for the annual Film Circuit
8. Announcement for the annual Where-in-the-World travel series
9. Invitations to previews and receptions for the new exhibitions and to meet lecturers
10. Additional selected publications
11. Other bonus rewards

DIRECTORS

BIENNIAL REPORT 1961-3

Members wishing to have a copy of the Directors' report are free to do so. Please write requesting that your copy be mailed. This well illustrated booklet will be of interest to those who wish to know more of the Museum's collections, acquisitions, gifts, research, exhibitions and educational programs.

Direct your request to: Museum Alliance, 900 Exposition Blvd., L.A. 7.

MEMBERS' CORNER

RECEPTION

On March 18 the GOLD BEFORE COLUMBUS exhibition opened with a gala reception and lecture by Dr. Junius B. Bird, of the American Museum of Natural History. Attended by an intensely interested audience, the lecture proved an exciting part of the evening. In May the announcement was made that the exhibition would be extended to June 28.

Dr. Junius B. Bird, eminent archeologist from the American Museum of Natural History, speaks with Dr. Herbert Friedmann, Museum Director, and Dr. George C. Kennedy of the Alliance Board, after his lecture on the opening night of the GOLD BEFORE COLUMBUS exhibition.



Below: Mr. P. T. Furst, Exhibition Director, is interviewed by Lloyd Perrin for "Megalopolis at Night" (KNX) which covered the preview of the GOLD BEFORE COLUMBUS exhibition.



SPECIAL MEMBERS EVENT

BAYANIHAN a full length color film of the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company was previewed at the Museum Auditorium on June 4, 5, and 6. This exciting film, made by Robert and Allegra Snyder, won a Special Award as the best folkloric documentary at the Bilbao Film Festival in Spain. The Museum Alliance plans to present unusual events of this type from time to time. Members will receive advance notice so they may have priority on space at the programs.

SPECIAL EVENTS FOR MEMBERS' CHILDREN

Summer Science Excursions, a new experiment now in progress to satisfy the demand for summer programs for children, has been meeting with great success. This series under the direction of Mrs. Bruce Belt has presented the opportunity for family groups to have weekly excursions to the seashore. Registered members of the class have one morning a week in classroom study in addition to the very pleasant field work.

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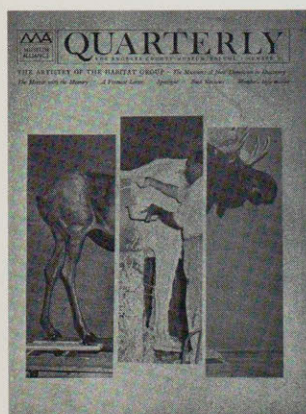
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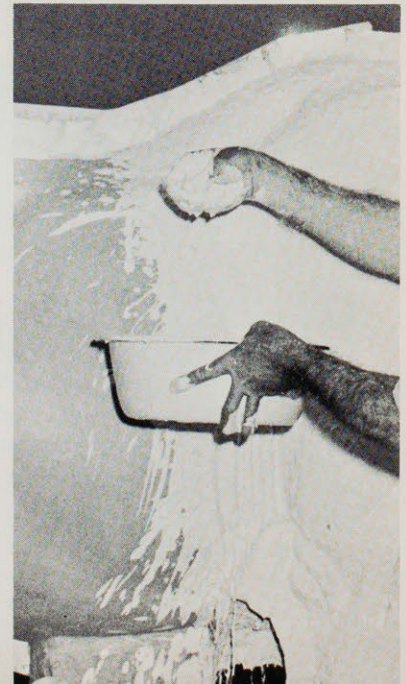
HERBERT FRIEDMANN

Director, Los Angeles County Museum

One of the most consistently popular types of exhibits in natural history museums is the habitat group. Here in the Los Angeles County Museum, the clattering of footsteps and the chattering of voices seem hushed when people turn from the well lighted marble corridors into the dark halls of the habitat groups. Inside these halls are lighted lifelike displays of animals. These groups have realistic settings including accurate scenic backgrounds painted skillfully and merged with the accessories of the foreground to create a three dimensional effect, a veritable stage for the animals in the cases.

Because habitat groups call for much expert and time-consuming work by artists and preparators, to say nothing of the expense of collecting the animals and the accessories,—plants, rocks, etc., they are very costly, and it is understandable that museums look upon such exhibits as permanent, unchanging items

THE
ARTISTRY
OF THE
HABITAT
GROUP





The skilled hands of Chief taxidermist George N. Adams finish scale models for the moose group.

in their public displays. Not only are they costly to produce, but they are space-consuming for the number of actual specimens they contain. A hall large enough to house an educational display explaining, for example, the biology of mammals, may, if devoted wholly to habitat groups, have room enough for only a dozen, or possibly fifteen, kinds of large mammals. How then, are we to justify habitat groups? What do they convey to the visitor that cannot be communicated as readily or as directly by other types of thematic or topical exhibits?

A habitat group is intended to show the visitor not only what a certain kind of animal looks like, but also to tell him something of the kind of country it inhabits and to reveal something of its habits. It gives a far more complete and meaningful presentation than would a display of the same, identical mounted specimens if they were standing alone on

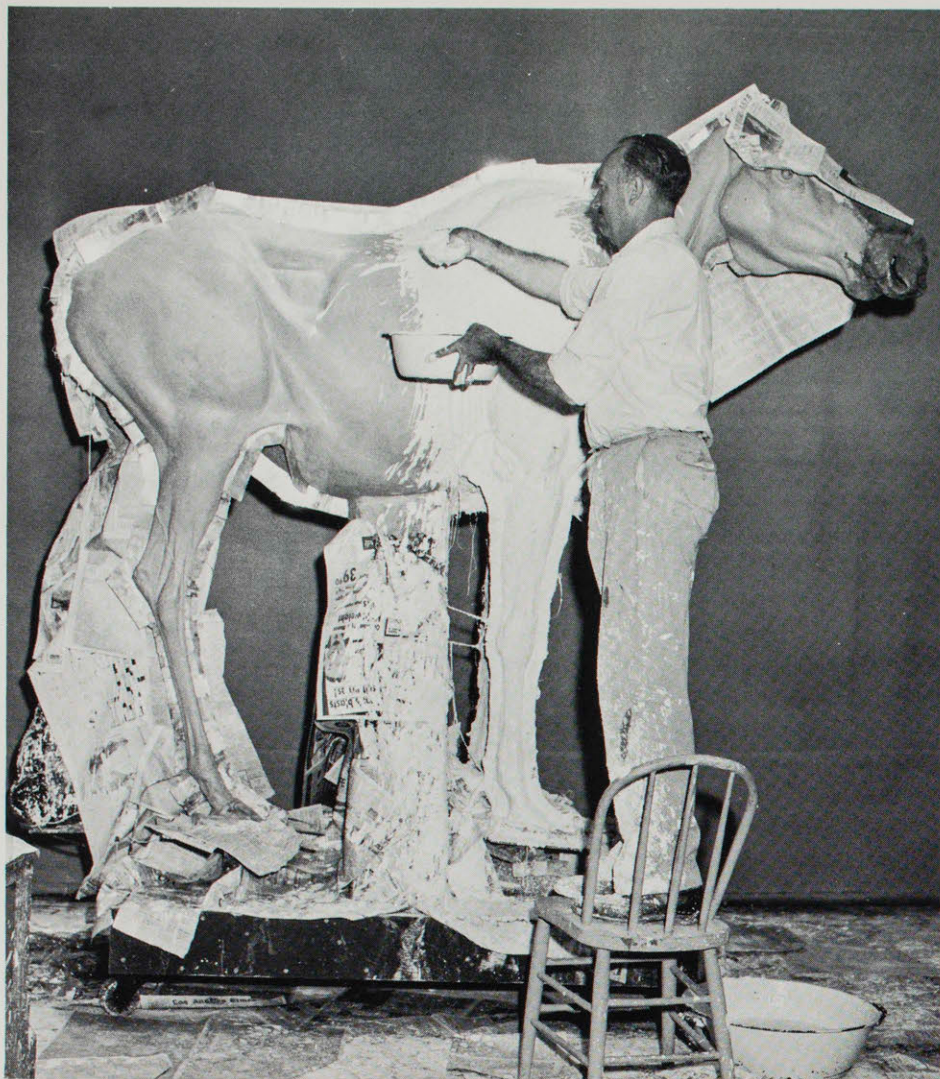
a polished slab of wood or in a neutral cloth-floored glass case. The important thing is that this extra information is given in such a way that the least informed, least prepared observer absorbs it without conscious effort on his part and even with a feeling of pleasure at contemplating the total effect.

It is true that most people know that the polar bear lives in the arctic and that a rhinoceros lives in warm countries, and it may be argued that there is no need to say this again in the expensive language of the habitat group. However, how each of these animals lives, and in what type of situations within the arctic or the tropics, as the case may be, is not generally known to many people. Furthermore, in the case of little known animals, whose very names may mean nothing to a visitor, the setting immediately helps the observer to understand that this creature, hitherto unknown to him, is not only the bearer of a name he did

not recall having heard or read, is not only of a certain size, form, and color, but is a denizen of the particular kind of environment,—forest, desert, seashore, or what ever it may be, shown in the habitat group.

In order to make the group as communicative, as informing as possible, no sign of the human effort involved in its construction should intrude. The artist painting the background has to forget "personal style" and to create, not a photographic rendition, but an illusion of reality. The background painting presents no occasion for the artists' signature and date, and a measure of its success is the difficulty of distinguishing its limits from the accessories in the foreground. The sculptural artistry of the taxidermist is wholly subservient to making the animal as life-like and "natural" as possible, as if to suggest no human hand was involved.

It is not realized by many people just

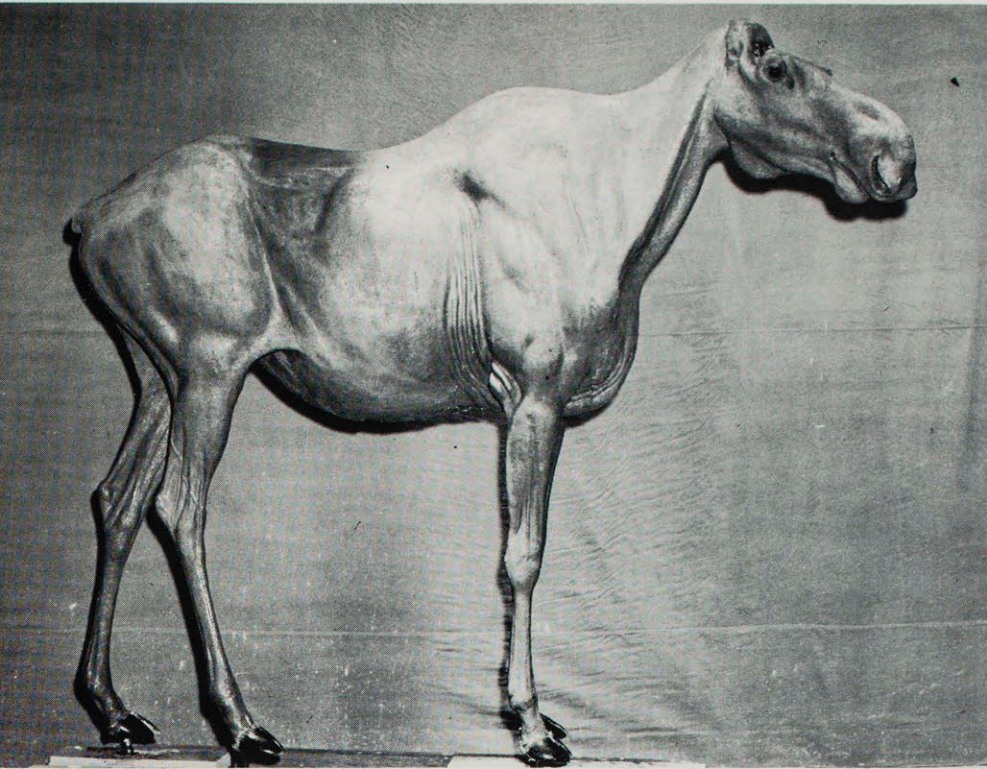


The clay statue is covered with plaster-of-paris.

what an art modern taxidermy is. The taxidermist must know the animal, must have studied a series of photographs of the beast taken from life in order to get the best, most typical poses, and he must be sensitive to the muscular tensions involved so that he may pose the mounted specimen in such a way as to suggest movement, or, at least, the possibility of movement. Otherwise the resulting mount is apt to look frozen or awkward. Before beginning to work on the habitat group, the taxidermist first makes small scale models of the animals to be included in it. This gives him the chance to study how best to arrange them in the future group. This is shown in the accompanying illustrations, taken during the production of the moose group. If you compare the picture showing chief taxidermist George N. Adams with the four models with the photograph of the finished group, you will see the alteration in relative positions of the four animals.

After the poses are approved, the next step is to create life sized clay models of each animal. In each case the actual skeleton of the animal is used in the armature on which the clay is added, to insure the accuracy of dimensions of the result. The finished clay is in effect a "skinned" model of the animal and it is in this stage that the sculptor-taxidermist is able to give the muscular stresses that he wants for the final mount. Much of the painstaking anatomical detail is lost in the final stage as the hide with its hair covers over much of this, but the detail is what makes for the excellence of the end result.

After the clay model is finished, it is coated with plaster and the plaster is allowed to set. Then the plaster mold is carefully removed from the clay form. The next step is to build up, inside this mold a light-weight, but firm and unyielding permanent mannekin. This is made of plaster, burlap, and other materials. When the two halves of the mannekin are finished, they are firmly joined. Before this step the necessary supporting irons are placed in the legs and wherever else they may be needed. The completed mannekin is light, practically indestructible, and not subject to insects or other pests. Inasmuch as it contains none of the heavy bones, particularly the skull, it is not likely to become "top-heavy." Finally the skin is placed over



The completed mannekin—the moose beneath the skin.

the mannekin, attached with countless small nails, glue, etc., the antlers are inserted in their sockets in the mannekin's head, the glass eyes are put in place, and any desired indication of slight moisture around the mouth and nostrils, is lightly brushed on with shellac and the animal is ready to be installed.

While the taxidermist is preparing the animals, the background painter is painting the "shell" of the case to give a convincing rendition of the scene of the habitat desired. He begins with a small sketch on a flat cardboard. This has to be critically studied by the exhibits designers and by the curator, who brings to bear his knowledge of the natural history of the animal and his acquaintance with the area depicted. When this sketch is emended as desired and is finally approved, the artist then begins to paint it full scale in the future habitat group. It is important that he paint the background with the precise lighting that the exhibit will have eventually, so that his color values are correct and the illusion of outdoor reality is as good as possible.

In the meantime other workers are busy on the materials, the plants, rocks, water, etc., that are to be placed in the foreground. These are usually referred to as the "accessories." They must be just as accurate as the animals and as the background. Whenever possible the ac-



The mounted specimen now majestic and ready to become the central figure in an unforgettable tableau.



The completed moose group, a creation of visual inspiration and instruction for the beholder.

tual plants are used; where leaves and flowers are called for these have to be made, as the dried originals would not have a life-like appearance. Just as the animals have to be carefully modelled, so too the fresh leaves, etc., are carefully placed in plaster and accurate molds are made of them. From these molds, metal dies are made, which can be used to stamp out as many leaves as necessary. In some groups the number of such leaves may run into many thousands. The artificial leaves, made of various synthetic materials have to be colored accurately and individually wired or otherwise attached to the stems or branches for their final use.

It takes much planning and the coordinated work of many skilled hands to produce the final result that we call a habitat group. The average museum visitor absorbs in a few minutes what may have taken months of devoted and creative effort to produce.

At this point a basic educational truth of museums deserves mention. Unlike schools and colleges, with their regular classes, quizzes, and assigned readings, museums teach in a more seductive way, luring the learner with the artful wiles of display techniques, and thereby causing him to enhance his knowledge continually and pleasantly without his realizing what is taking place. In the classroom the presence and the voice of the teacher is inevitable and is dominant, even essential, as the communicator. In the museum exhibition gallery, the exhibits are the teachers.

One, possibly surprising, comparison may be added, as it seems to me important in evaluating the relative merits of the habitat group as compared with the lone, unaccompanied mounted specimen. This comparison should not be applied beyond this; it does not give us a measure of rating thematic or topical exhibits in relation to habitat groups.

The comparison I wish to make is with portraits in an art gallery, limiting the comparison to portraits in the mode of representational art as practiced until a century ago. When a person had his portrait painted, the production of a recognizable likeness was certainly foremost in his mind, as in that of the artist. The difference between a portrait by a great master and one by a mediocre painter far transcends the mere information that the sitter had blue eyes or brown hair or a scar on one cheek. The great painter does not merely represent the sitter; he presents him, and he presents him to us in such a way that we realize him as a personality without conscious effort or inquiry on our part. In other words a great portrait tells much more than a mediocre one, and a large part of the pleasure we experience on looking at a great portrait is this feeling, that without any definite mental exertion on our part we have come to realize an-

other human being more completely, more quickly, less tiringly, and more pleasantly, than we otherwise could. If the mere information of physical characteristics were all that mattered, we could hardly get the enjoyment we do from portraits of unknown, and no longer identifiable people, and we would hardly return to take a second look at paintings of named ones, as the information would have been transmitted to us in the first look. We return because we enjoy this sense of effortless realization and feel that our vitality has somehow been enhanced for the moment.

In a similar sense, a habitat group, if well done, presents the animal to us, whereas a lone mounted specimen without a proper setting, merely represents its outward appearance. I do not mean to imply that every habitat group is the equivalent of a work of art, but its inherent motivation is along the same lines. Both start out to convey facts about the sitter or the animal, and both, to the degree that they are successful, tell us far more than these basic items.

In the case of habitat groups, I have heard teachers state that there "isn't much you can say about them." This is of course, because the groups do the saying themselves.



Above: In the "Polar bears and artic fox" group a seal has been caught by the bears. The wily fox waits nearby for any scraps that may be left.

Middle: A Gemsbok group at home on the Kalahari Desert of Bechuanaland.

Left: The animal in the upper left of the Wolverine Group has caught a ptarmigan and is bringing it to its mate.

THE MUSEUM: A NEW DIMENSION IN DISCOVERY

by RICHARD LIPSCOMB

Presenting the oldest non-living actors in the world the Education Division under the direction of its chief, Russell Smith, is currently completing production on a new color film about the Museum titled, "The Museum: A New Dimension In Discovery." From the twenty-five hundred year old Egyptian mummy, formerly a rather obscure merchant of Alexandria (and the least likely person you can imagine to entertain any idea about breaking into the movies) back to the Pleistocene skull of a Saber Tooth Cat the new film presents a wide variety of the Museum's exhibits and is designed to instruct the browser in how he may get the most out of his tour through the Museum.

Emphasis is on heightened interest in the objects in the museum in the belief that closer looking will unlock more of the stories the exhibits have to tell. Whale bones, a beaded Indian basket, some pre-Columbian figures, a Concord coach, Kodiak Bears, are only some of the actors in this film; and they are searched and traveled over with some care by the camera eye. It is hoped that this will suggest to the Museum visitor that he can add to his interest and understanding by similar search and care.

In rather restrained, formalized terms the film indicates that the museum is a smorgasbord of delight from which each guest takes what he likes. It also indicates that the guest does himself a favor by tasting exotic offerings beyond those that usually titillate him.

In concept, the film is another attempt to bridge the gap between hard scholarship and the public. In its habitat groups and historical dioramas the Museum has already taken steps to reach its lay visi-



Above: The head of a Saber Tooth Cat is shown in its entirety, the way the visitor usually sees it.

Right: A detailed shot of the front teeth of the Saber Tooth Cat is taken to emphasize structures often overlooked by the visitor.

tors. And this is as it should be, for without communication and relation to the living world the Museum abrogates part of its public responsibility. But the visitor has his responsibility too; and this new film suggests, quietly, that it would be fitting for the visitor coming into the Museum to take several steps mentally each time toward understanding the Museum, rather than simply propelling himself through it physically. It indicates gently that, despite common belief, it may not be the Museum that is dead; but perhaps it is the moribund imagination and perception of the visitor that needs reviving.

The film indicates by certain unobtrusive ways what the visitor may do to look at objects systematically. And it starts off bringing order to the baffled, or superficial, observer by admitting that the diversity of objects in a museum is so great there simply is no single way to look at them all. This was a formidable realization for the creators of this film and for some months it was a great barrier preventing the making of the film, since the purpose of the film is to simplify.

Though the film's creators tried very

hard to present one single set of rules by which everyone could look at everything in the Museum, it just wasn't possible. There seemed no unified theory. The attempt was made to devise a "scientific method." The only drawback to that was that it wasn't really a method, nor was it very scientific.

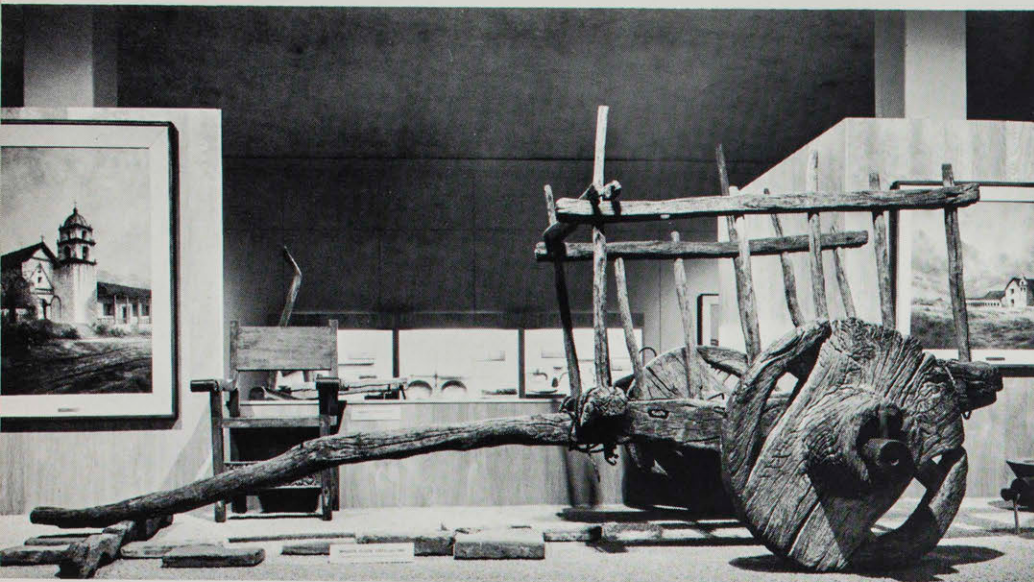
After much soul-searching, however, it finally seemed valid to report that people look at the major divisions in the Museum in a generally consistent way, within the division—at art and culture in one way, from the viewpoint of the artist and the times; at history in another way, in a sense of dramatic participation; and at nature and the animal habitat groups in another way, with the interest and curiosity of science.

And, of course, it was realized that each individual looks at all these classifications in a slightly different way from his neighbor—so we have modifications upon modifications.

That's why the attempt to make a "How To Do . . ." film was abandoned.

Realization came that the film should not try to state a standardized way in which everyone could look at everything in the Museum in the same way; but,





An ancient Carreta is an exhibit which attracts many visitors to the Museum. In the film it is shown as most people would view it.



The visitor is directed to a closer view of the well worn wheel of the Carreta.

instead, it became clear, the film should bring out the tremendous variety of experiences available in the Museum, engage imagination through the real interest inherent in the exhibits and, wherever possible, indicate some sort of systematic viewing.

The film includes a modestly encyclopaedic cross-section of the offerings a visitor will find in the Museum. A two hundred year old Spanish cart used in early California is tied into the Point Dana diorama, illustrating the use of these carts in the early hide trade. The Concord stage is vividly depicted in the diorama showing arrival of a cross-country coach at a desert way-station.

Wherever possible through narration or camera movement the attempt has been made to infuse a sense of the life and reality of the time and stir imagination—consequently, pots rotate, dinosaurs dip and galleons sail.

A saber tooth cat skull is shown in animated sequence with the lower jaw hinging open to indicate the manner in which the terrible sabers were brought into play; the beauty of a California Indian basket is shown; the impudence and whimsy of several pre-Columbian figurines are observed from a number of angles.

And these are only part of the exhibits on which the film touches. Nothing is handled in detail; but everything is described sufficiently so that the viewer may realize there is more to everything he sees than just what he sees. Going beyond that, however, the film indicates



The final shot of the carreta reveals fascinating details in the structure of the wood and the construction of the wheel.



J. Michael Hagopian, producer, Russell J. Smith, Advisor, and Richard Lipscomb, consultant, discuss plans for the film.

how the visitor may look more deeply and knowledgeably to discover more intense interests, and satisfy them.

The film then is an attempt to present the Museum to the public:

By pointing out that different objects in the Museum call for different ways of looking—the visitor may be released from the burden of thinking that he must look at everything with equal interest and in the same way; and he is thus freed to develop his areas of interest.

By indicating in a modest way how a viewer may systematically look at exhibits—the visitors' laggard perception may be jogged.

By indicating the perspective of his own place in history—imagination may be stirred.

And by opening the entire realm of history, nature and the past the individual viewer can discover new dimensions for himself and find his understanding of himself vastly enriched.

The exhibits in the Museum speak for themselves. They have much to tell; and our film asks the viewer to observe carefully, to look systematically and to be willing to receive of the treasures the Museum has for him.

Most of all, perhaps, the Museum asks the visitor for an attitude—for a willingness to adventure, and for alertness. If the film can arouse wider interest and

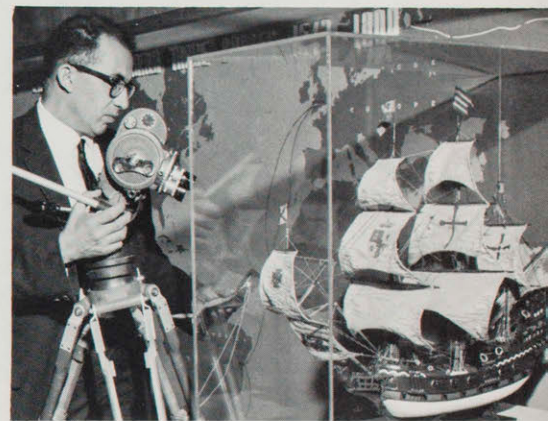
deeper imagination in those who come into the Museum it will have served its purpose.

Michael Hagopian has produced the film with Russell Smith as Advisor through all the vicissitudes detailed, and many more; Mr. Hagopian has directed the color photography and served as film editor, and I have acted as Consultant.

"The Museum: A New Dimension In Discovery" will be available for loan to interested groups when final prints are in hand.



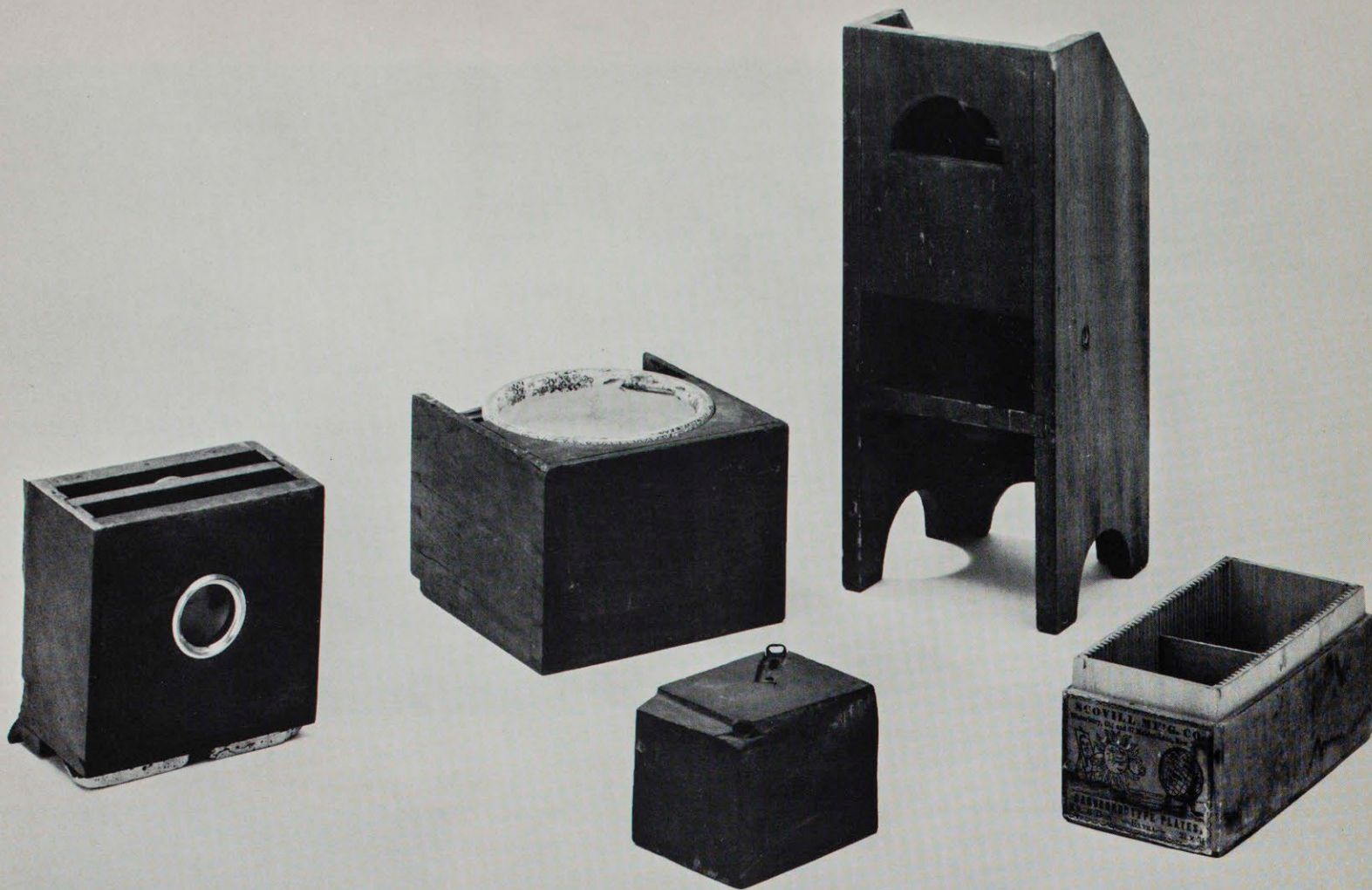
Mr. Hagopian plans the various scenes which will best tell the story of how to look at a fossil.



Mr. Hagopian takes a reading in preparation for a picture of the Manilla Galleon in the California History Hall.



A close-up shot of a diorama in the California History Hall will reveal many details unnoticed in a casual glance at the entire scene.



A part of the collection secured in the trade with the Pony Express Museum: 1) back of the front portion of the camera showing the lens; 2) iodine fuming bowl; 3) block to hold plates for polishing; 4) cabinet for developing with heated mercury; 5) plate box.

THE MIRROR with the MEMORY

Have you ever wondered how Museum collections are secured? There are many ways, but in the acquisition of some valuable photographic daguerreotype material about thirty years ago, I completed the transaction in a rather unique way.

It was some years before I came to work for the Los Angeles County Museum that I became interested in the history of the daguerreotype. This interest was aroused primarily by the purchase of a secondhand daguerreotype manual. Not satisfied with the manual alone, I began to search for a camera. I haunted camera stores, pawn shops and other likely sources. I found no camera but other good items in the field were acquired.

After I came to the Museum, my interest in the daguerreotype did not wane but other interests were also fostered. It so happened that one of my early accessions in the Physical and Mechanical Sci-

ences section was a collection of glass-blowing equipment. There were eight or ten extra blowpipes which were for sale at fifty cents each. I bought them, feeling they might be valuable for trading purposes.

One day, I was going over to the Pony Express Museum in Arcadia, so I put one of the glass blowpipes in the side car of my motorcycle with the hope that I might trade it for something. Mr. Parker Lyon, of the Museum, seemed quite interested in it and told me to look around to see whether I could find something I would like to have in exchange for it. There was no problem finding things I wanted. The question was what would he be willing to part with for what I had to trade.

As I was searching through the collection, he tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Say, Matthews, do you know anything about photography?" I admitted I

knew a little on the subject and he replied, "Good! I have a box of photographic equipment used in Hangtown (now Placerville, California) in 1850, but I don't know how it was used." He pulled a good-sized box from under an exhibit case and said, "Look it over," upon which he moved on to entertain another visitor.

The case contained several boxes of spoiled daguerreotypes. To the unschooled eye they might seem lost, but they can be cleaned and made usable again by anyone who can work in this intricate process. Two of these boxes had the fascinating label of the Scovill Mfg. Co., one of the first makers of daguerreotype plates. They pictured a sketch of the sun painting a picture of the earth. Another item was a bowl for fuming, or sensitizing, the plates with iodine. This had a slide with an orifice on one end for holding the plate to be sensitized, and a

ground-glass cover on the other end to keep the iodine from evaporating when not in use. There was a block for holding a plate when being polished, and the little cabinet for developing them with heated mercury. In the very bottom of the box were the major parts of a daguerreotype camera. The front part had the most primitive wooden shutter and a single piece lens. The back part had the ground glass and a couple of plate holders. The only thing missing was the shell that joined the two parts and into which the back telescoped for focusing.

This was a challenge. I just had to have this material, but would it require a "king's ransom" to secure it? While I was pondering, Mr. Lyon and his visitors passed by. He paused and asked me whether I could use any of it. I told him I should like to have the whole collection, but what would it cost? "Oh, take it along if you like it," he said. "You can have it for the blowpipe."

So, another impetus was added to my intense interest in this daguerreotype field of photographic reproduction. It was an interest which had been aroused by this ingenious invention of over a hundred years ago by the Parisian, Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, after whom the process was named. The first announcement appeared in the Paris, France newspapers of January 7 and 14, 1839. It was adopted in the United States almost immediately.

Daguerre had tried for several years to "fix the image in the camera obscura" before he was successful. He sensitized highly polished silver-coated copper plates with iodine fumes and after exposure, developed them with the vapor of heated mercury. Fixing the image was accomplished with chloride or hyposulphite of soda. These plates are actually negatives as right and left are transposed, however the mercury adhering to the parts which received the most light makes the highlights look bright by comparison to the shadow areas which did not receive the mercury.

The necessary exposures for the first daguerreotypes were too long for portraiture, though heroic attempts were made with the head in a clamp for as long as twenty minutes at a time in bright sunlight. In fact, the head clamp was used for a number of years after the additional sensitizing of the plates with bromine added to their speed, and faster

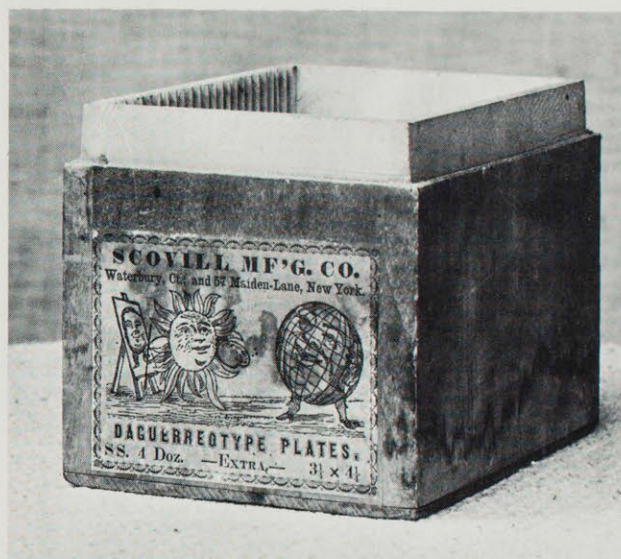


Top: Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre. By Charles Meade, 1848.

Center: Daguerreotype Plate Box. c. 1850.

Bottom: Abel Fletcher (1820-1890), Self-Portrait. c. 1850.

Mr. Fletcher started making daguerreotypes in 1843 at Massillon, Ohio.

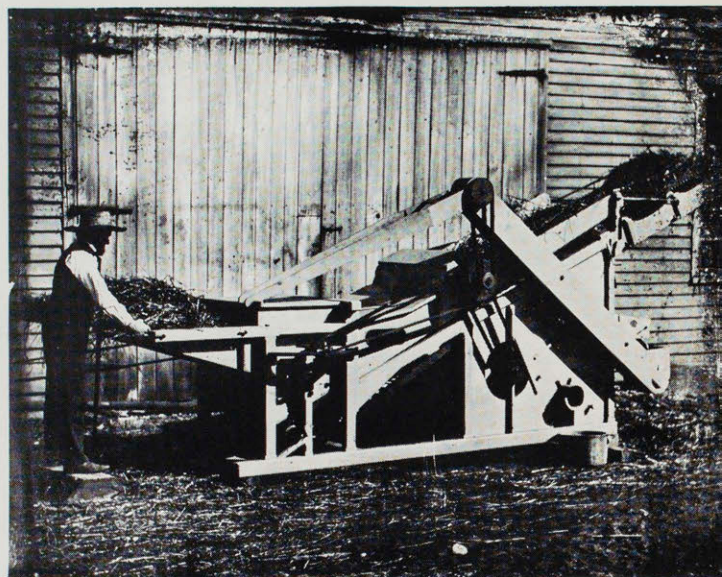




lenses cut down the exposure time considerably.

At first, a separate sitting was necessary for each individual picture, but with improved cameras, an original daguerreotype could be set up and photographed as many times as needed for additional pictures. This improvement also corrected the right and left transposition. Soon multiple lens cameras were being manufactured to take several pictures at one sitting.

Because of the very delicate nature of the daguerreotype's surface, it needed to be protected from the least abrasion. One brush of a finger across its sensitive surface could completely spoil it. For protection, you will find it was always mounted in a little glass-covered case, the glass being kept away from contact with the picture surface.



*Top: Home in Massillon, Ohio.
By Abel Fletcher, c. 1850.*

*Center left: Street scene in Massillon,
Ohio. By Abel Fletcher, c. 1850.*

*Center right: Threshing Machine built
at Massillon, Ohio.
By Abel Fletcher, c. 1850.*

*Bottom: Falls of St. Anthony between
St. Paul and Minneapolis.
Maker unknown, c. 1850.*

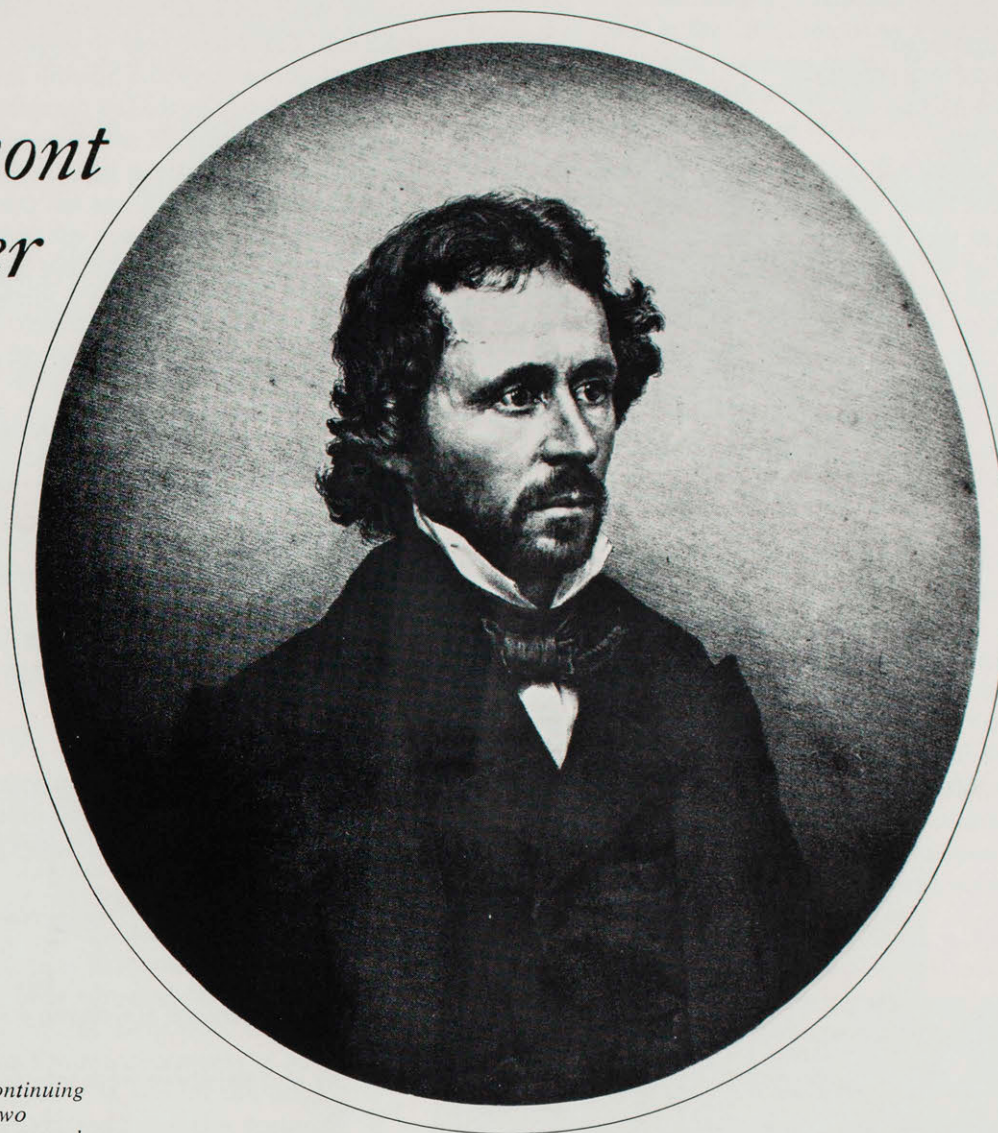


The ambrotype, another similar photographic process, became popular about 1850. It also had a very delicate surface that had to be protected, so it was mounted similar to the daguerreotype which resulted in one being confused with the other. This is especially true today. A true daguerreotype, however, can always be recognized by its metallic luster and it is much rarer than the ambrotype.

This beautiful and valuable process, which has permanently secured for us images of early scenes, events and people, has been obsolete for almost a century and no modern practices are based on it.

RANSOM MATTHEWS
*Associate Curator of
Mechanical Sciences*

A Fremont Letter



In the History Division's continuing cataloging program, these two documents were recently uncovered. Heretofore unpublished, they offer interesting and important testimony regarding John C. Fremont's actions during his short tenure as Governor of California.

John C. Fremont, 1850, by F. D. Avignon from a daguerreotype by Brady. Museum Collection.

The name of General John Charles Frémont is inextricably woven into the history of California and especially Los Angeles. Explorer and topographer, writer and poet, his particular genius was denied its full expression through a seemingly senseless wrangle between two other officers—Commodore Robert F. Stockton, a naval officer who arrived in California in 1846 to replace Sloat as commander of United States naval forces in Pacific waters, and Stephen Watts Kearny, a veteran of the War of 1812, an experienced army officer, and commander of the “Army of the West.”

After the cessation of hostilities between Mexico and the United States with the conquest of California formalized in the capitulation at “Cowenga,” January 13, 1847, Frémont took residence at Los Angeles in his official capacity. From the time he arrived at his headquarters near the plaza the next day, Lieutenant Colonel of the United States Army and Military Commander of California as appointed by Stockton,

until his dismissal as “ex-Governor” by Kearny early in March—a tenure of about six weeks—his brief office became the cat’s-paw between Stockton and Kearny as they savagely vied for supreme control. Ultimately, Kearny was to arrest Frémont and bring him before a court-martial for trial in the East.

Frémont seems to have been well liked by much of the native Mexican population who regaled him with their hospitality. Years later, when he ran for the Presidency of the United States as the first Republican candidate, one of the few blocs to have supported him was here in southern California.

Out of this brief interlude, which was the source of both despair and delight for the man, comes a letter now in the History Division of the Los Angeles County Museum, written one week after his arrival in town.

Ciudad de Los Angeles—
21st Jany. 1847—

To

Don Felipe Lugo—
Don Macedonia Aguilar—
Don Thomas Sanchez—

Gentlemen,

You are hereby appointed by me as Governor of California a board of survey to ascertain the number of cattle killed and to whom they belonged, by the U.S. Forces under the Command of Commodore Stockton and Genl. Kearney [sic], and report the same with all needful particulars to me at your earliest convenience—

Your acceptance of this commission will be considered a matter of course unless you instruct me to the contrary—

Very Respectfully,

J. C. Frémont,

Governor and Commander in Chief of California—

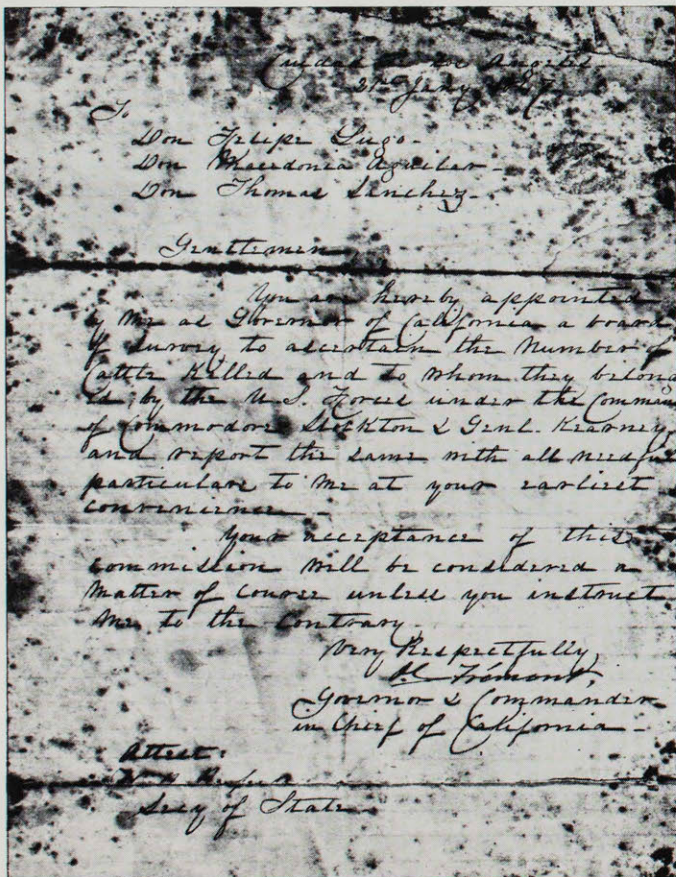
Attest:

Wm H. Russell

Secy of State—

The payment of the Mexicans for the provisions obtained from them during military activities was to become an issue which was ultimately resolved after a fashion, but in its prolongation disillusioned these people. During military actions, the supplies obtained were guaranteed by claims issued on the government. The controversy between Stockton and Kearny became of great concern, for upon it hinged to no small degree the strength of the Mexican claims on the United

Fremont letter of 1847 to Don Felipe Lugo, Don Macedonio Aguilar and Don Tomas Sanchez. Museum Collection.



States government. In this respect another letter is equally interesting, showing as it does that in the beginning these notes were respected and even settled promptly, however difficult it may have been to collect. Somebody more versed in legal phraseology and Spanish law than this writer, could have done better by the last paragraph which is given here in a literal translation. It seems quite clear, though, that having signed the invoice in good faith so that it could be presented for collection, it was not paid for lack of funds. Ten years later, Sr. Ocampo was still trying to prove he had never received the money due him and perhaps in desperation was turning the bill over to Don Agustín Olvera.

The United States Naval and Land Forces for operations in California.

To Francisco Ocampo Dr.

For the following supplies furnished the US. Forces on the march to Los Angeles, viz:

1847		Provisions			
Jany 7	2 Bullocks	@ \$7	\$14 00		
	3 sheep	@ \$2	6 00	20 00	
		Forage			
	24-1/2 Fanegas	Corn @ \$3	73 50	73 50	
		Fuel			
	15 Loads Wood	@ \$2	30 00	30 00	

I certify that the articles embraced in the above account were received and expended for the use of the US. Forces

J. Bidwell Qrmaster

	Transportation			
8 Oxen	@ \$10	80 00		
5 Yokes	@ 150¢	7 50	87 50	
Two hundred and eleven dollars			\$211 00	

I certify that the above were received for the use of the U.S. Forces.

J. Bidwell Qrmaster

I certify that I have examined the foregoing account, and find that the articles were received, and that the prices are according to the customary rates of the country.

S.C. Rowan

Asg(?) the Naval Forces on the
March to the Pueblo

Appd Feby 27 1847 for Two hundred and eleven dollars and Purser Speiden will pay the same.

R. F. Stockton

Commander

Perhaps some items in this invoice need explanation. For instance, in measuring grain and seed the Mexicans used a fanega which was about 55½ liters, dry measure. There are also two signatures whose owners are probably not so well known. John Bidwell, "Prince of California Pioneers," was a significant figure in California from his arrival in 1841 until the end of the century, and S. C. Rowan was probably Lieutenant Rowan of the ship *Cyane*.

(Reverse)

Received, San Diego 27th Feby. 1847, of William Speiden Purser U.S. Ship Congress, the sum of two hundred and eleven dollars in full of the above account.

Witness
testigo
Agustin Olvera
Por el presente

co
Fran Ocampo
testigo
Juan Bandini

Certifico que haviendome entregado por encargo, Don Francisco Ocampo el presente documento con el objeto de percibir la cantidad reconocida de 211 pesos que el expresa, haviendola presentado, y no satisfecha por falta de fondos, segun se me dijo, volvi al dicho Sr Ocampo los documentos relativos, y si aparecen firmados como recibido, fue en razon de que no se admitian sin la del interesado, y estando ausente del lugar fue preciso anticipar la firma, para evitar el inconveniente de su ausencia.

Y en fe de lo cual y para los usos que convenga a D. Francisco Ocampo firme el presente en la Ciudad de los Angeles a 23 de Sept. de 1857.

Juan Bandini

Paguen a la orden de Dn Agustin Olvera

co
Fran- Ocampo

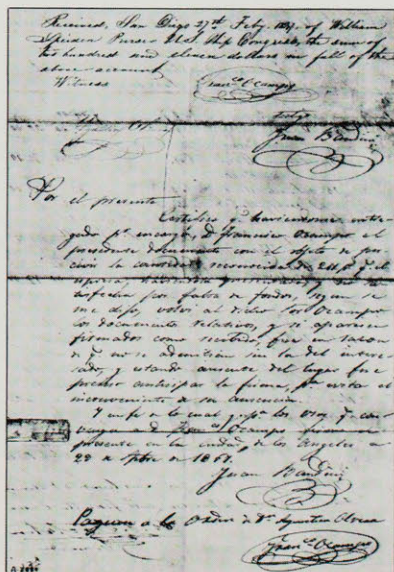
By this statement I certify that Don Francisco Ocampo delivered to me this document with the object of collecting the authorized amount of 211 pesos due him, having presented the bill, and not being paid for lack of funds, so I was informed, I returned to Sr. Ocampo the related documents and if this bears his signature as collected it is because this document would not have been admitted without his signature, and since he was not present in the place of collecting it was necessary for him to sign the documents in advance.

In order to show that this is true and for the usage that will be convenient for Mr. Ocampo I sign this document in the City of Los Angeles, 23 of September, 1857.

Juan Bandini

Pay to the order of Don Agustin Olvera

Francisco Ocampo



The signatures on this document are by men of importance in southern California history. Francisco Ocampo, born in Mexico, was listed in the 1850 census as a grazier. He had a home near the present southeast corner of the Plaza, fronting on a smaller square called Ocampo's Plaza. He married Francisca Urive, wealthy widow of Giovanni Batiste Leandre, owner of the Rancho de los Coyotes of 20,000 acres near La Habra. He was eventually to lose all his holdings and die a poor man.

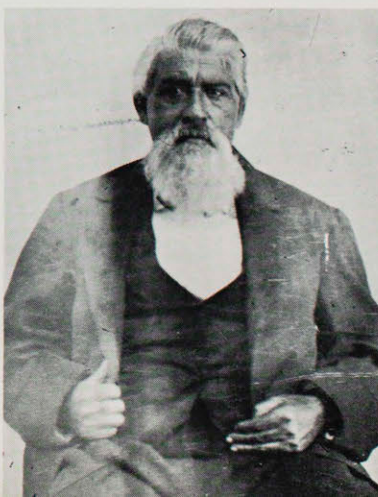
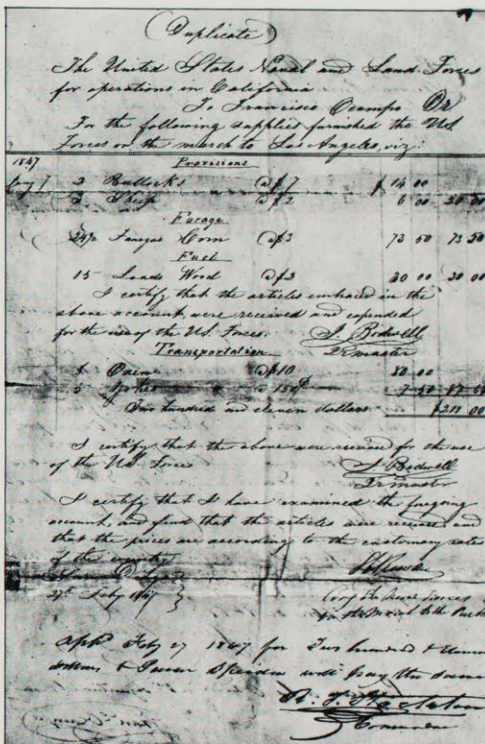
Agustin Olvera was another important citizen of Los Angeles. He came to Los Angeles September 16, 1834 from the City of Mexico. He became "Juez de la Instancia" of the Los Angeles District, under appointment of Governor Riley.

Juan Bandini, a native of Peru, was long a prominent figure in the territory and one of the inhabitants who leaned toward the United States occupation of California.

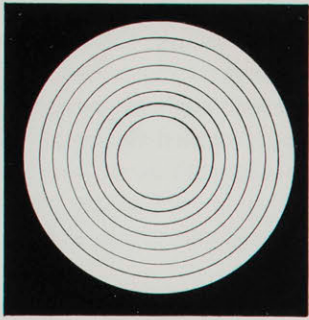
JOHN DEWAR
Assistant Curator,
California History

Below: Invoice with Stockton signature, 1847, Museum Collection.

Lower left: Reverse of invoice with Stockton signature, 1847. Museum Collection.

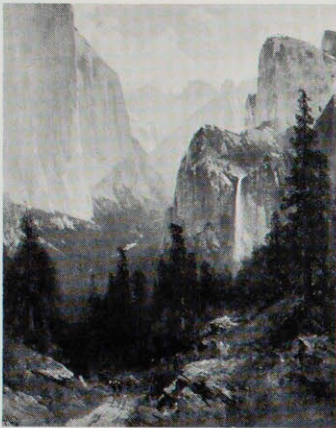


Francisco Ocampo,
Museum Collection.



MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

RECENT MAJOR GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM



"Stagecoach leaving Yosemite Valley, 1868" by Thomas Hill.

While it is impossible to list all gifts, the Museum is extremely grateful to the many other donors who have given generously to our collections.

GIFTS OR BEQUESTS to the Los Angeles County Museum are a contribution to the educational and research programs of the Museum and to the total value of the Museum to the community. Such gifts, whether of money or of objects, are deductible for tax purposes.

The History Division has received the original digital computer, the Maddida I, developed between 1946 and 1950, and used by Northrop for the Snark Missile Program. This was a gift of Landis Associates.

Mr. George F. Beck, a retired geology professor from Central Washington State College at Ellensburg, has given a collection of nearly 900 specimens of Pliocene fossil vertebrates to the Museum. This gift represents the cream of nearly thirty years of collecting in the Ellensburg and Yakima area of south-central Washington. There will be a future QUARTERLY article on this collection which reveals the remains of fish, crocodiles, turtles, birds, ground sloths, rabbits, squirrels, beavers, cats, dogs, badgers, horses, tapirs, peccaries, camels, antilocaprids and deer.

The Museum has received a major collection of identified fishes consisting primarily of tropical marine fishes from a

number of isolated islands of the central Pacific. This gift came to the Museum from the World Life Research Institute, Colton, California, through its Director, Dr. Bruce W. Halstead.

The collection of 1729 specimens presents 234 species which were not previously represented in the research collections. Dr. Halstead, one of the world's foremost authorities on poisonous and noxious fishes, is a Research Associate in Ichthyology with the Museum and plans further gifts as his research projects develop.

A recent gift to the History Division by Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Honeyman, Jr. is the Thomas Hill (1829-1908) painting, "Stagecoach Leaving Yosemite Valley, 1868." As an important addition to the Westward Movement Gallery, it vividly illustrates one of the magnetic lures that has continuously brought people west—the scenic grandeur of the country.

Born in England, Thomas Hill came to the United States while still quite young and made his first trip to California in 1861. Ultimately, he was to settle here, devoting himself to painting his spectacular scenes.

NEW MUSEUM INSTRUCTOR

Mr. Richard Lipscomb was appointed Museum Instructor in the Division of Education last March. He came to the Museum from the Departments of Social Service and Municipal Art of the City of Los Angeles where he was public relations officer. In addition to the usual duties of Museum Instructor he will be concerned with films, TV, radio, music and special



Mr. Richard Lipscomb, newly appointed Museum Educational Specialist.

programs. He will also cooperate with City and County School districts in educational programs for TV.

Mr. Lipscomb received his B.A. degree from Tulane University in 1941 and an M.A. degree in Drama from Cornell University in 1942. From 1946 to 1948 he was Assistant Professor of Speech and Director of the Theater for the University of Alabama after which he served as Associate Professor of Drama at the University of Texas.

Mr. Lipscomb was a music and drama critic for the "Hollywood Citizen-News" for a number of years. In Hollywood he has also worked as a writer and story editor for several television and motion picture companies, including the "Fireside Theater" series (NBC), "Behind Closed Doors" (NBC), "Surfside Six" (Warner Bros., ABC), "The Verdict Is Yours" (CBS) and others. For two years he was Assistant Producer and Story Editor for the highly regarded CBS-TV series, "You Are There." Mr. Lipscomb is a member of the Writers Guild of America, west.

RANSOM MATTHEWS— A SECOND GENERATION FRONTIERSMAN

by Katherine Jenney

This month marks the retirement of Mr. Ransom Matthews, Curator of Mechanical Sciences. The Museum is losing a most valued member of its staff, the scope of whose work it would be impossible to evaluate fully. Much of his Mechanical Sciences collection is not catalogued and indexed as yet because there was not time for Mr. Matthews to do all that he planned to do. There is never time enough for the truly dedicated man.

Ransom Matthews

Mr. Matthews' interest in Mechanical Science started on a farm and grew from his love for farm machinery. He became fascinated with engines and the other kinds of machinery around him including such things as pumps and the tools of the blacksmith. All this led rather naturally to a concern with the preservation of the past. He found a great deal of material at historical celebrations and at county fairs.

From this beginning, Mr. Matthews' interest spread to photographic history, communications history, industry and transportation. Automotive history finally became his main interest. He has acquired a deep storehouse of informa-

tion about the automobile and its history.

But Mr. Matthews also has knowledge of a wide variety of mechanical objects such as cameras, gasoline engines and steam engines. In fact, one can consult him about almost any mechanical object and he can tell when it was made, who made it and how it was used. Besides having a rare memory for detail, he has the type of foresight which enables him to collect important objects before they become museum pieces.

Unusual is the curator who is so dedicated to his work as has been Ransom Matthews. Indeed, his extreme interest and involvement with his collections was so complete that one would have difficulty in determining that thin line of demarcation between the man and the material he so loves. He has a type of unselfish self-sufficiency. As one of his co-workers said, "Ransom Matthews is a humanist, a second generation frontiersman of a sort which embodies the ideals and virtues that were the outgrowth of the independence a frontiersman had to have. To him, artifacts aren't lumps of wood, leather and glass—they are human expression of history."

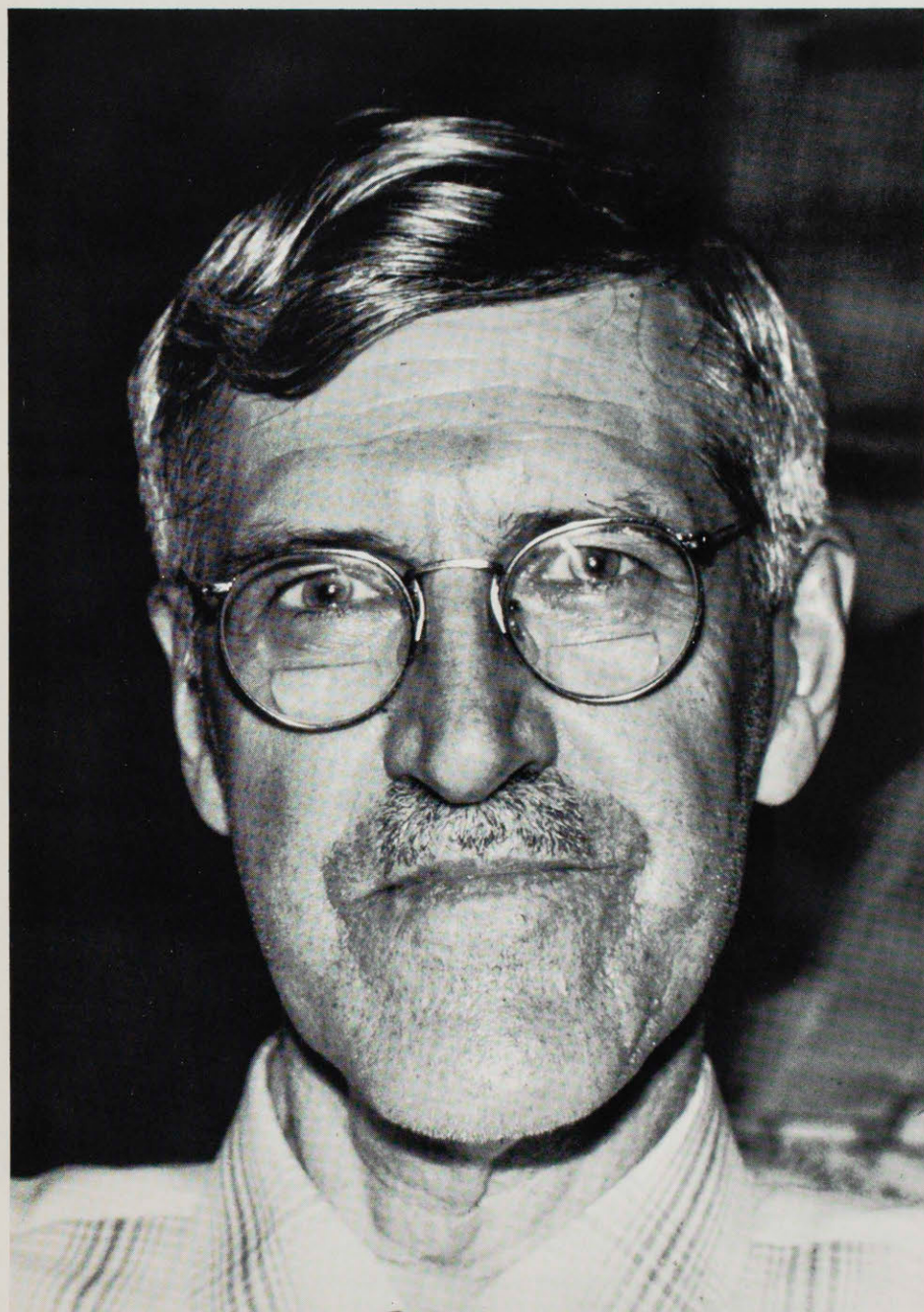
SOUTH DAKOTA EXPEDITION

Dr. J. R. Macdonald, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology, and Mr. Harley J. Garbani, Museum Field Assistant, are spending three months at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. Dr. Macdonald has been working the early Miocene mammal bearing deposits in the area since 1953 through the support of a National Science Foundation grant. This is his first field season at Wounded Knee since accepting his Museum assignment. The social highlight of the summer on the Indian reservation will be the colorful annual Sioux Sun Dance Festival, August 1-4.

A REWARDING OFFER FOR VOLUNTEERS

A training class for Museum volunteers in science and history begins in October. This Docent program now in its third year has proved to be popular and rewarding for the volunteers involved and highly effective for the Museum.

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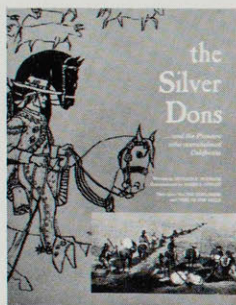
The trainee spends time in organized study of the exhibition galleries; curators lecture on their chosen field; laboratory and behind-the-scenes tours round out this rare opportunity for adult learning and service within the Museum. For the Docents desiring to tour special groups, public speaking training is planned.

The class meets two mornings a month continuing through the social lunch hour. While the program is one of discovery and learning, it is also a wonderful opportunity to meet many interesting people while hostessing at receptions and family participation events held for members and guests.

For more details on this training opportunity please call or write Mrs. Donald Allen, 4645 Encino Avenue, Encino. ST 8-0916. (The QUARTERLY, Vol. 2, #1 carried an article on the Docent Program.)



The challenge of working with young, active minds ranks among the rewards of the Volunteer Docent training program. Many adult groups are also toured within the Museum.



BOOK REVIEW



The Silver Dons, Volume 3 of The History of San Diego, by Richard F. Pourade (Union-Tribune Publishing Company, San Diego, 1963; \$9.50)

This, the third volume of a yet incomplete history of San Diego continues Pourade's narrative begun in *THE EXPLORERS and TIME OF THE BELLS*. He uses state papers, diaries, journals, personal correspondence, and specialized secondary works to trace the development of California's southwesternmost corner during its colorful transition from mission era to political, social and cultural Americanization. First, Pourade describes the region in 1830, symbolized by the silver accoutrements of the mounted *Californios* of the title. Vividly he describes the disintegration of the unprotected Indian, quarrels of Mexican *políticos* that influenced San Diego, and the Mexican War, detailing the southern California revolt, 1846-47, and the roles of Pico, Kearny, Stockton and others.

While northern California was metamorphosed by the gold rush, San Diego enjoyed a boomlet in cattle, whaling, and commerce, William Heath Davis vainly founded New Town, others tried to develop overland staging. Meanwhile land title litigation, Indian and outlaw attacks, and the coming of the Civil War broke the pastoral calm. These years, 1830-65, present a community on the verge of "Yankee progress" and therefore cannot mirror epic events because San Diego still grew slowly.

In fifteen short, well-organized chapters, Pourade does not offer major revisions to standard history, but his work is a vast improvement over earlier California county histories. One of its contributions is the tracing of routes in this period of semi-isolation. There are a two-page California chronology of the era, lists of San Diego's *alcaldes* and California's governors, and a useful five-page bibliography and ten-page index.

THE SILVER DONS contains an impressive selection of uncluttered maps and unhackneyed and appropriate illustrations. Several of the best pictures are from the History Division of Los Angeles County Museum.

JOHN E. BAUR
History Instructor

Collecting Rocks, Minerals, Gems and Fossils, by Russell P. MacFall (Hawthorne Press Inc., New York, 1963. 156 pages—\$3.95)

Beginners in the field of Earth Science will find this an illuminating book on a new and rapidly developing hobby. Although the stress is on collecting, there is also a wealth of good elementary instruction on basic identification with numerous tables on the identity and classification of the common rocks, minerals, and fossils. A chapter devoted to field collecting offers fine information on the proper approach and methods of collecting. There is also a section on fluorescence in minerals and a list of museums having geological displays.

Here is a competently written, although comparatively simple book for the beginner which will also benefit those who have progressed further. If there is a "young adult" in your house whom you would like to introduce to the fascinating world of rocks, minerals, and fossils, this book would be a suitable starting point.

Recently, several similar books have been published presenting a general review of the Earth Sciences with elementary information on various aspects of the "rock" hobby.

Among the others in the field which we may recommend is *ROCKS AND MINERALS OF CALIFORNIA*, Second Revised Edition by Vinson Brown and David Allan (Naturegraph Co., Healdsburg, California, 120 pages—paperbound—\$2.95).

ROBERT GAAL
Curator of Mineralogy

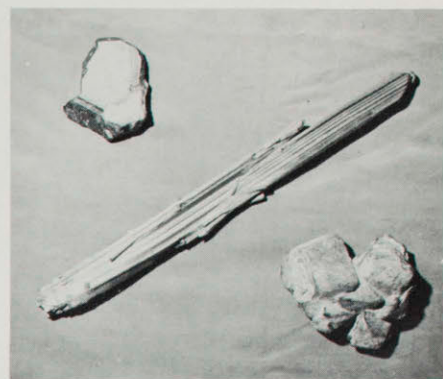
Books reviewed here may be purchased through the Museum Bookshop. Members receive their discount as usual.

SPECIAL COMING EVENT

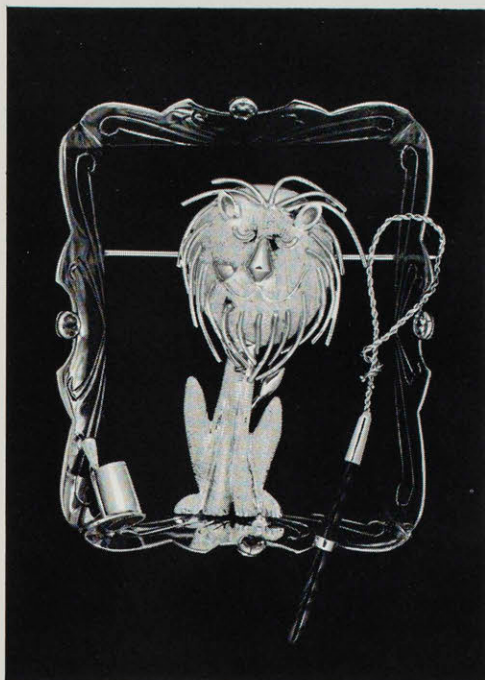
The best in the west of award winning gems and minerals, prize winning jewelry, beautiful carvings in stone, superb carved bowls, intarsia, and faceted stones will be shown during the special California Federation of Mineralogical Societies exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum from September 8 to November 1, 1964.



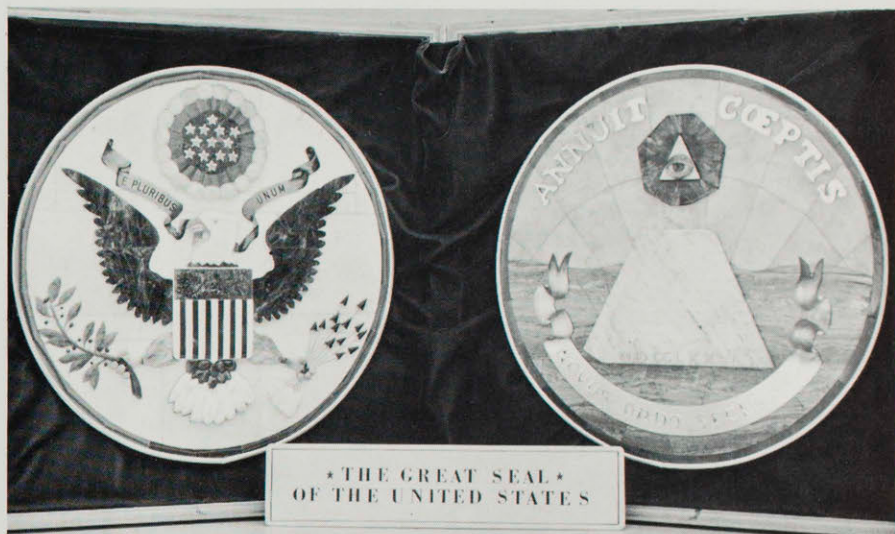
Group of bowls carved from semi-precious minerals.



Mineral crystals.



Decorative use of minerals in jewelry.



Great Seal of the United States in precious and semi-precious gem stones Intarsia.

MUSEUM ALLIANCE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting on May 28 was held in the Outdoor Gallery of the Museum with Dr. Andrew Rolle as the guest speaker. Dr. Rolle's theme: California—"Its Glowing Past and Clouded Future," proved of great interest to both the native and the many who have adopted the state. As a man of wide background and now Professor of History at Occidental College, Dr. Rolle has contributed many publications in his field.

In addition to the usual order of business including committee reports and the allocation of discretionary funds to the

Museum, an official vote was taken changing the name of the members' organization to: LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM ALLIANCE—for brevity to be known as the Museum Alliance. This action was taken to help eliminate existing confusion with the Science and Industry Museum.

The meeting was sponsored under the chairmanship of Mrs. Bruce Belt and Miss Janice May, members of the Alliance Board of Directors. Hostesses for the occasion were members of the Museum Docent group who perform many valuable services for the Alliance.

Dr. Andrew Rolle



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